

Grace S. Taboada

Colonel Bleep *and the Uncharted Earth*



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Summary: Colonel Bleep, an intelligent intergalactic commander of the Futura High Command, is assigned on a mission from Futura to Earth, where he shall investigate past nuclear explosions and the launch of Sputnik 1. There, he will befriend two misfits: Squeak, the childlike puppet who dreams of being a space ranger, and Scratch, the powerful caveman who needs help adapting to the modern world. Unexpectedly, Bleep will clash with the menacing criminal mastermind, Dr. Destructo, who will do anything to rob the spaceman's life.

Adapted from Colonel Bleep by Robert D. Buchanan and Jack Schleh

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No AI technology was used other than for correcting punctuation, spelling, and grammar from Grammarly.

*This is in honor of Robert D. Buchanan and Jack
Schleh, who made Colonel Bleep and its
fantastic universe possible.*

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Note to Readers: The following is a sneak peek at the novel. Until the official book is released, only a few chapters will be accessible.

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"So, here they are, three very strange companions,
Colonel Bleep...[Bleeps] of the *future*,
[Squeaks] Squeak of the *present*,
and Scratch...[Scratches] of the *distant past*.
Together, they travel up, down, backwards, or
forwards, in distance or in *time*.
Together, they face danger and death as they
fight to maintain right and justice throughout the
vast galaxies of the world."

- Noah Tyler. *Excerpt of Col. Bleep's Arrival on Earth* (circa 1956 - 1957)

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PREFACE

The following novel includes content that I did not purely create. This story is an adaptation of a long-lost animated television show named after the titular character. If you remember watching the show on TV, home video, or on the internet, you will likely recognize its premise and characters. If you have not heard about *Colonel Bleep*, you may need to know more about this show and its complicated history.

Long ago, in 1951, a group of artists had recently graduated from college and attempted to pursue their careers and talents by creating an animated studio called Soundac. In their humble beginnings, the animators created commercials when television was new to the populace. Eventually, the studio started producing game and auction shows like *Dollar Derby*, *Melody Mileage*, *Watch the Birdie*, and *Musical Tune-O*. About six years after Soundac was formed, the employees created adorable weather reports featuring a cartoonish anthropomorphic triangle known as the Weather Man. While these reports were one of Soundac's more recognizable works, a new project would bring the studio to its peak.

From around 1954 to 1957, scientists in the United States and the former Soviet Union worked to create space probes before they could achieve their dream of exploring the universe. The notorious Soviets were first in line to launch Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite. Sputnik 1 would change studies regarding space and pop culture depicting the beauty of the cosmos. The workers at Soundac grew inspired by the world's ambition to voyage across the universe. Because of this impact, they began working on an animated quiz show targeted at children titled *The Adventures of Colonel Bleep*,

which would eventually be shortened to *Colonel Bleep*. Unlike most cartoons of today, which aired on at least one broadcasting channel or streaming service, the show was syndicated and featured in children's programs(think news reports, but with cartoons and interactive activities for the small fry). At least each week or on all weekdays, the show would feature a new mini-adventure lasting for about four to six minutes, a series of quizzes, and riddles for the older viewers. At that time, viewers could call whoever was hosting the show in their local town by phone so that they could answer these quizzes and riddles that would be worth special prizes delivered by mail. Anyone who wanted to join the show's fan club could always search for its advertisements on food products such as bread bags or cereal boxes.

The show's premise revolves around Colonel Bleep, the intelligent space ranger working for the Futura High Command on planet Futura. When nuclear explosions occur on Earth, Bleep and the rest of his species, known as the futurians, are alarmed by these bombs. Seeing them as signs of trouble, members of the Futura High Command send Colonel Bleep to Earth, where he would later meet his two loyal deputies, Squeak and Scratch. Squeak is depicted as the happy-go-lucky marionette shaped like a little boy. His origins could be more evident, and he needs a mouth and a voice for himself(though there are a few episodes in which he talks). Despite these issues, he can still move and think independently and is filled with curiosity, as most children. Scratch is the clueless but mighty prehistoric brawn of the trio. Although all cave people should have been extinct, Scratch is practically the last of his kind. He was accidentally sent from the Stone Age to the modern world after being blasted out of an atomic explosion while falling asleep for "several thousands of years." The three heroes decide to band together by creating a home on a small tropical island and working with one another as they venture across the universe and protect it from evil forces. In terms of symbolism,

Colonel Bleep, Squeak, and Scratch represent the future, present, and past, respectively, thus making them the show's main stars.

Based on all the surviving episodes, the series has been divided into four groups: travelogue, space patrol, criminal, and Zero-Zero Island episodes. Travelogue episodes depicted Colonel Bleep and his friends exploring different planets and places on Earth, with or without substantial conflict. Space patrol episodes revolved around those with Squeak and Scratch piloting their space scooters while encountering hijinks. Other space patrol episodes revolve around Bleep and his crew piloting their starship, the Trav-a-Lab, where they investigate hazards in favor of charting a map that can improve the safety of space travel. Criminal episodes involve different villains (individuals or with a team) trying to threaten the lives of our heroic characters. The four most prominent antagonists were Dr. Destructo (master criminal of outer space), Bruto the Black Robot (a former minion of Destructo), Black Patch (a bloodthirsty one-eyed pirate and leader of his crew), and the Black Knight of Pluto (a knight of stealth and mischief with his castle). Episodes set on Zero-Zero island involve the three leading stars experiencing trouble on their island, or they may encounter silly hijinks at home.

While the show was developing, the creators, Robert D. Buchanan and Jack Schleh, were amazed by the bleeping signals Sputnik created out in space. This would be an inspiration to Colonel Bleep's name. They did not have much money to hire an entire voice cast, so they hired a newscaster from Miami, Florida, named Noah Tyler, to take care of the narration and sometimes voice all the characters. The show was supposed to last only 52 episodes but then extended to about 100 to 104. Neither Buchanan nor Schleh was happy about this change. This was possibly because they already had enough ideas for a serialized plot, let alone a saga. Despite this, the employees did manage to spice up the fun of working on *Colonel Bleep*. For

instance, the art style was heavily inspired by Googie Architecture and the Raygun Gothic aesthetic, both popular art styles in the Golden Space Age. The show didn't have much dialogue from the characters, but it made up for its hilarious sound effects(especially if they come from the characters) and the action sequences. The show's most significant impact would be that *Colonel Bleep* became known as the first animated television series in color, barely beating Hanna-Barbera's first cartoon TV series, *The Ruff and Reddy Show*.

Although *Colonel Bleep* was Soundac's most successful project, the show does not get as much recognition as it used to. The show's quality had not aged well because the animation was too shoddy, the plot was unstable with more episodes than needed, and the characters were unwilling to express themselves due to little to no dialogue. The show also doesn't receive as much appreciation as before because it became lost and left behind in obscurity. Based on hidden research, Soundac's time lasted as late as 1981, but it is unknown when the studio closed down. Many say that Soundac's supplies, such as film reels, artwork, and other equipment, were stored in a van. Car thieves then stole the van, and it has never been found. I am unsure if this is the real story behind the fate of Soundac, but I know that a large portion of the *Colonel Bleep* episodes has been missing. Luckily, less than half of the show has been restored on home video and the internet. I have tried to call for help finding more episodes, but sadly, it is not enough.

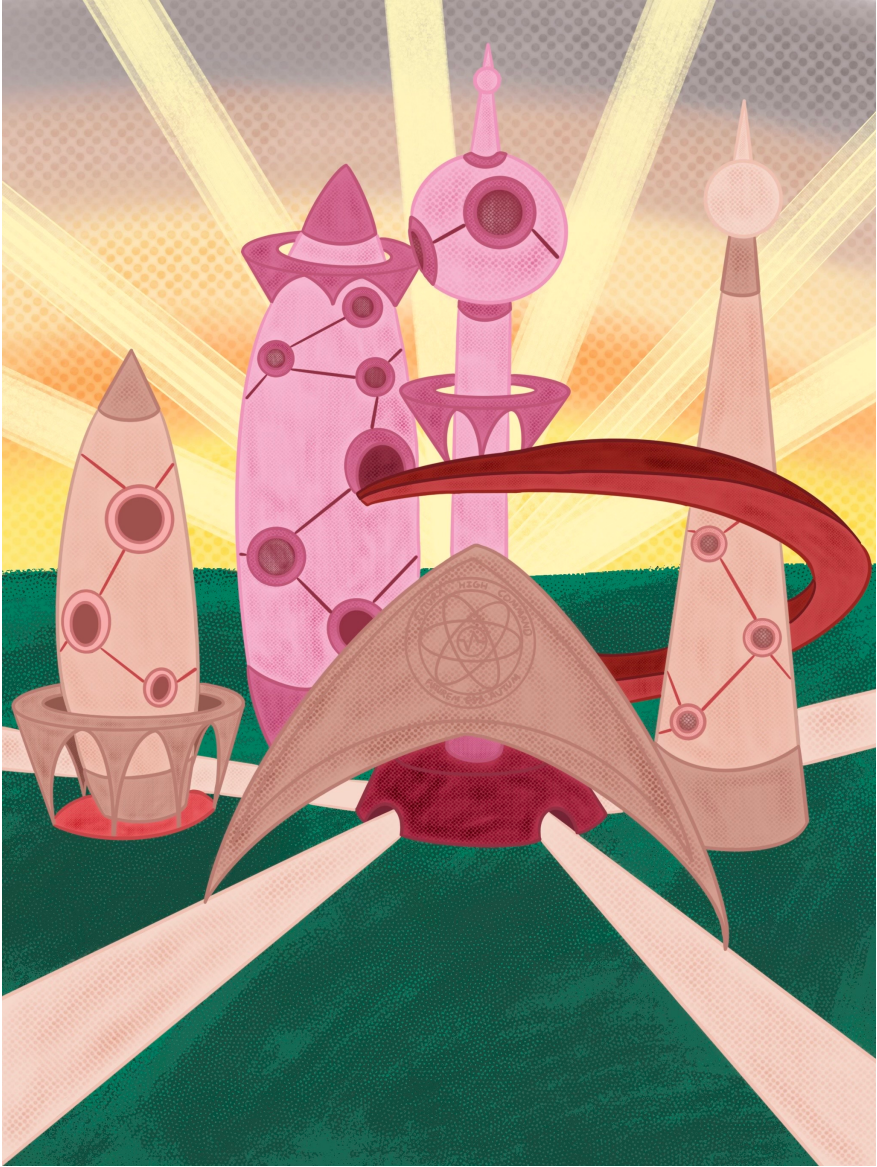
Since 1985, the show's copyright status has failed to be renewed and is now in the Public Domain. Fortunately, anyone can legally use and take care of these episodes without causing copyright infringements. Aside from using these episodes from old film reels, it is also legal to create adaptations of the show, which is why I started this novel. In comparison, I intend to offer nostalgia to older fans and invite newer fans interested in *Colonel Bleep*. Therefore, I have made this novel to

expand the show's content, including fleshing out the characters and their personalities, adding dialogue for the characters, and improving the art style by making it more detailed, lively, and colorful with digital mid-century modern illustrations from Procreate. This is done to prove to readers that anything is possible when adapting public domain media for current and future generations. I also hope this novel will convince readers(especially film archivists) to help restore more lost episodes so that anyone, regardless of age, can experience the complete adventures of *Colonel Bleep*. Without further ado, stand by for adventure and endure the exciting story of *Colonel Bleep and the Uncharted Earth!*

— *Grace S. Taboada*

Part One

THE SPACEMAN'S BEGINNING



PROLOGUE

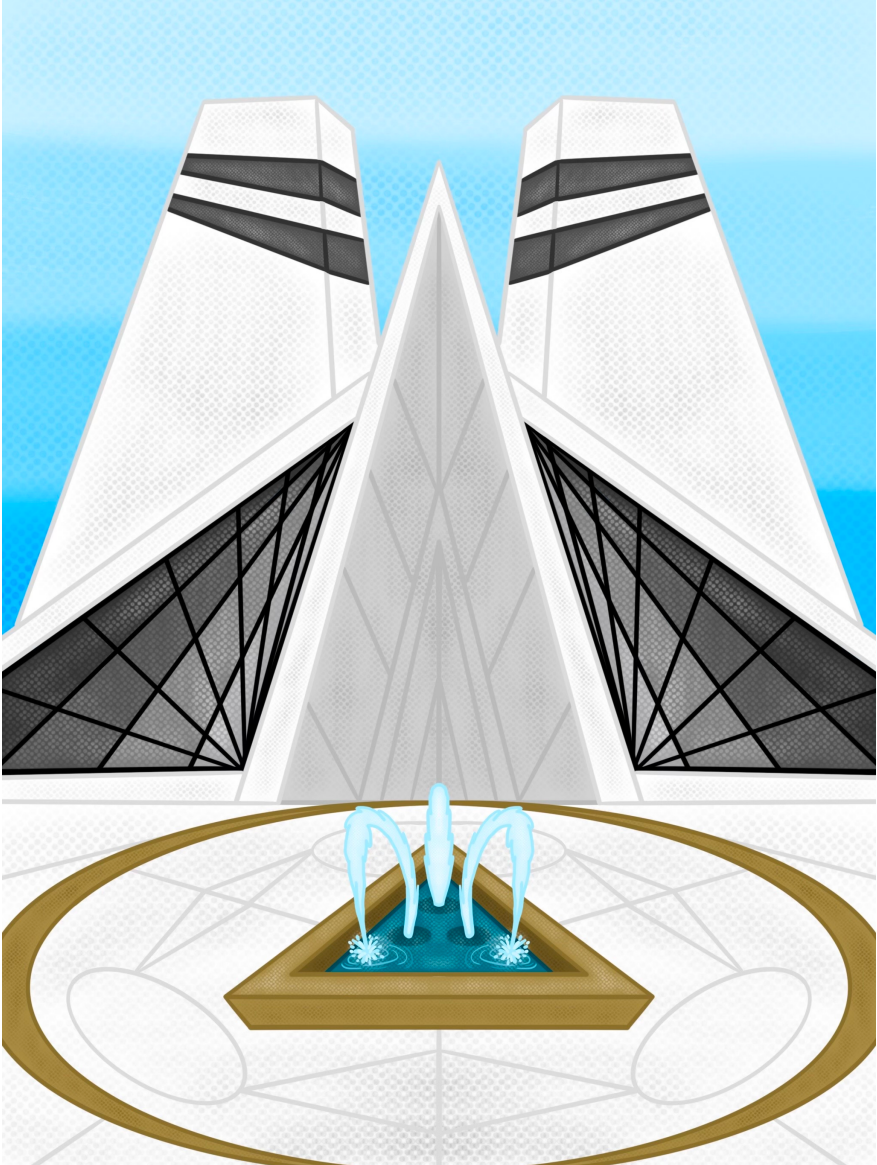
The magnificent planet of Futura orbits in the Nova System, located in a nearby galaxy called Galaxy 9. This planet is known for its highly advanced space technology, thus being nicknamed the “space capital of the universe.” With this in mind, the intelligent species of Futura, known as the Futurians, began their space age 750 years ago. For the first fifty years, scientists, technicians, engineers, artists, and mathematicians used their skills, wits, and courage to build space probes orbiting their planet and exploring distant celestial objects. In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Futura’s first successful satellite, the Morningstar, an interplanetary intelligence agency called the Futura High Command, was formed. The agency aimed to gather fellow agents worldwide to help investigate and better understand the universe and protect it from evil powers.

Of course, since they took space exploration seriously, the FHC built a university for aspiring cadets to pursue prominent roles as space officers. Agents who succeeded from officer training can select the following divisions: command, operations, education, medical, security, science, and mission control. The most experienced officers would be granted into the admiral division after serving the FHC for 30 years. Those who chose to apply for armed services were included in the enlisted fleet.

As the FHC kept growing since it started, agents continued inventing and sending more powerful spacecraft to expand their knowledge of the universe and prepare themselves to interfere with other planets. After 210 years of development, futurians have become more successful in developing the necessary gear, transportation, and

equipment to explore different worlds in the Nova System and the rest of Galaxy 9. Soon after another 210 years, space travel became the norm of the journey as futurians and other intelligent species used powerful rockets, cruisers, space stations, and traffic guides for travelers to maneuver across Galaxy 9 safely. However, just because Futura's space age has lasted for centuries doesn't mean its timeline was always sailing smoothly, especially in cosmic wars, for the FHC agents have battled planets where danger lurked around as its helpless denizens called for their help. These perilous battles required them and other allies to have courage, strategy, strength, and stealth.

As the Futura High Command continued to gain more knowledge in space, they eventually interfered with the Milky Way Galaxy and its solar system, where scientists built life-supporting territories for incoming visitors and citizens. FHC agents have interfered with every world in the Solar System except Earth, at least not after 259 years. That would all change when an exceptional space cadet enrolled at the Futura High Command Academy.





Chapter One

CADET MORNINGSTAR

The Futura High Command Academy was packed with new students ready to play honorable roles for the FHC, including one eighteen-year-old space cadet, Lucius Morningstar. He was five feet and six inches tall (about 1.65 meters) and weighed only 118 pounds (about fifty-four kilograms). His skin was as silver as the moon, and his gray hair was styled in a buzz cut.

As the cadet approached the main entrance to campus, Morningstar set up a new recording from his specialized computer journal disguised as a wristwatch: “Cadet’s Log, Day One. Today is the day I move into the Futura High Command Academy. While I must excel in every course for the upcoming five years, things will start smoothly with the yearly orientation check-in.” It was true that orientation had arrived for the first-year cadets, and all students had to wear formal uniforms, though Morningstar preferred casual over dressy wear. Despite this restriction, today was going to be an event worth celebrating.

Just as he reaches the entrance doors, Cadet Morningstar notices another student walking in the opposite direction of everyone else. He appeared to be the same height and weight, though with pale green skin and vivid green hair in a pixie cut. Concerned, Morningstar follows this unusual student to get his attention. As Morningstar softly places his hand on the other student’s shoulder, the latter turns his head with a dirty glare.

Politely, Cadet Morningstar asks, “Excuse me? Are you lost?”

“Who are you?” the other cadet says rudely.

“Lucius Morningstar. Freshman Cadet.”

“Étoile Feu. I am also a Freshman Cadet. Forgive me for my inappropriate attitude. I was trying to make my tour across this place.”

“You wouldn’t want to get lost alone. I’ve toured this place for every vacation break, so I could show you around as a good friend would.”

“Um, thank you, but I don’t accompany strangers much.”

Just as Cadet Feu leaves the area, Morningstar refuses to leave him alone. “Hang on a second; we barely met. Besides, the reception hall is this way. Most importantly, we have orientation on bloom. We could get to know each other on the way. Come on. Just trust me.” After Morningstar finishes his sentence, Cadet Feu can’t stand Morningstar’s sweet demeanor but decides to give in.





Chapter Two

ACQUAINTANCES

Throughout the first day of orientation, Morningstar and Feu's relationship appears to begin smoothly. During the evening, the two are in the reception hall having a friendly conversation. "Hang on a second; you were saying you were a child prodigy?" Cadet Feu asks. Morningstar answers, "Yep, I excelled in grad school when I was sixteen, college at fourteen, and high school at ten. However, scientists created me and several other children in an illegal operation. My parents, who reluctantly participated in the project, tried to escape soon after I was born but were killed in a car crash. Since then, I grew up in an orphanage while learning to maneuver my enhanced speed, agility, strength, and, most importantly, intelligence."

After a sad pause, Morningstar realizes he was exposing a negative aspect of his past to Feu. "Sorry, I took it too far. Because I could use my gifts for something special, I decided to pursue a career in becoming a space commander."

"Oh, really? I barely graduated with a master's at the current age of eighteen. It's quite common for us, indeed."

"So you were a prodigy as well?"

"Yep, guessing we're one of the only ones, unlike everyone else who graduated at the average age. Besides, you told me how you toured this campus during the school breaks?"

“I’ve done it with and without a group of other future cadets. Though funny, I can memorize each building quickly, including the Bolt Needle, where they depict the statues of the nine mythical gods.”

“You mean this building?” Feu asks while pointing to a tower that appears to be one of the most beautiful buildings on campus. Bleep nods. By a spark, Feu plans to go secretly with Bleep to the Bolt Needle.

“Maybe if you show me, I may know how to go my special ways.”

“I don’t know; the tower may be heavily guarded for this day.”

“Don’t be stupid. Everyone’s too distracted with all the craze going on with the ceremony. Let’s go. That personal tour we’re making up could be a moment never forgotten.”

As Feu chuckles with mischief, Morningstar hesitates about checking out the Bolt Needle in the dark, but he doesn’t want to be left out by someone he just met.

“Okay. I’ll do it, but just for a short time.”

“Excellent, my friend. That surprise you’re giving should be to die for.”

Cadet Feu was satisfied with making Cadet Morningstar his guide to the Bolt Needle. When they left the Student Union Building to the landmark’s entrance, Morningstar started to predict that something was clearly off about this smug student.





Chapter Three

THE BOLT NEEDLE

When they first approach Bolt Needle, Cadet Morningstar, and Cadet Feu take the elevator as their transport and encounter two of the tower's highest and most exquisite floors. The first floor has white and gold pillars, black crystallized marble, and six majestic statues. Morningstar wanted to avoid going to the tower but only to please Cadet Feu.

“Here we are, the place you’ve been “dying” to see: the greatest floors in the tower.” Cadet Feu gazes at the first room with amazement, but the statues significantly get his attention. Morningstar explains each sculpture to his acquaintance. “There’s the statue of Anil, the god of the air and the sky. Dhara is the goddess of earth, life, and nature. Bast, god of fire and the sun. Nera, the goddess of water and the oceans. Samson is the god of the aether, energy, and light. And Dal, the goddess of the nether, death, and darkness.”

The second floor has elaborate stained glass windows and three more resplendent statues. “Here’s the more beautiful floor, which features Danica, goddess of the celestials and matter, and Tiyezeragnats, the god of space and expansion. Lastly, there’s Futura, the goddess of time and fate. Many found Futura, Tiyezeragnats, and Danica fascinating gods because ancient legends say each used their almighty powers to balance time, space, and celestial matter perfectly. Still, scientists have claimed that space is more complex because there is more than one universe and that matter comes in various if not

asymmetrical, shapes and sizes. They also claim time is unpredictable and can go in many directions.”

The statement about time being unpredictable allowed Cadet Feu to speak up more. “Unpredictable, they say? That is such a clever statement. I can see why our knowledge of time advanced from making up some so-called powerful idols. Like how events occur on unexpected occasions...especially death.”

By that moment, Morningstar’s smile dropped after hearing that ominous word. Cadet Feu showed a demonic grin and violently punched Cadet Morningstar straight to the guts. Morningstar struggles to get up on his own while Feu approaches the statues. “Fun fact: I was initially sent here to steal some weapons protected in the academy, but it was nice of you to take me to the Bolt Needle. Why don’t you sleep with a bullet in your head while I continue the assignment myself?” Cadet Feu then unveils a pistol from his blazer. Cadet Morningstar finds out if this student is just an evil faker. “Wait a minute. You’re not a real student, if I’m correct. You’re not named Étoile Feu, are you?” Cadet Feu laughs out, “Ha! That’s something you could name for your toilet...” Just as the “cadet” could finish his sentence, Cadet Morningstar quickly jolts to stop him before Cadet Feu could shoot him down. The bullet hits the emergency alarm, causing the red lights to flash in the tower’s rooms. Feu tries to reshoot Morningstar, but his victim blocks him in a fistfight.

Just as Morningstar thought he could do some victorious justice, Feu wasn’t completely done with him. “You won’t get away with this, imposter. Now tell me, who are you? What are you?” “Oh, that was only a warm-up, idiot! I’ll love to see you try and stop me.” Cadet Feu strips off his uniform to reveal a black bodysuit with a pack of eight robotic arms resembling the tentacles of a squid. Cadet Morningstar begins to tremble even more. “You’re an assassin?” Fire

answers while putting on a pair of goggles, “I’m more than just an assassin. I work for the Octave Force as Agent Omega. Now that I have no use of you, it’s time you’ve reached the end of your life.” Morningstar tries to defend Agent Omega with the latter’s gun, but the agent’s enhanced tentacles are too fast for him. The space cadet escapes as fast as possible through the emergency escape route, but the agent is advantageous in catching up.

Cadet Morningstar unintentionally enters the security floor. A group of security guards attempt to capture Agent Omega. Two of the guards command Morningstar to escape the building. Morningstar, however, sees the agent easily defeating the rest of the team. Still holding the gun, Cadet Morningstar returns to the security floor, ignoring the guards' demand to retreat. Believing he’s the only one to stop the enemy, Morningstar removes his blazer and tie and sets to defeat the imposter. While Agent Omega attacks more guards, Cadet Morningstar interrupts the scene. When the agent’s eye catches Morningstar, the cadet manages to activate the trigger and shoot two bullets toward the agent’s goggles. The googles shatter and burn while Agent Omega screams in pain. He loses control of his tentacles as they immediately target Morningstar by scraping his chest and arms and throwing him down to the floor. Cadet Morningstar could barely move a muscle but could feel blood soaking the top of his torn-down uniform. He sees the last active security guards surround Agent Omega, who is covering his bleeding head. The cadet slowly shuts his eyes after that.



Chapter Four

TRAUMATIZED

Everything felt pitch black for Cadet Morningstar until he saw a white light and felt a chilling breeze crawling through his skin. The cadet wakes up and sees himself in a hospital room. Morningstar appears to be lying in a bed with elastic wrap bandages covering parts of his bare torso. A nurse and a doctor see him awake while the cadet begins to breathe. “He’s awake!” The nurse calls out. The doctor asks Morningstar if the latter is all right, though Morningstar can only think about what happened since the Bolt Needle incident. “You were unconscious in that accident. Thank goodness you’re still alive.”

Soon, Cadet Morningstar remembers the culprit he met before. With very little oxygen, the cadet asks, “Where’s the agent?” The nurse replies, “I’m not sure who you’re referring to, but just try to relax, and we’ll give you some water.” Thirty minutes later, the cadet’s thirst was quenched, and he could move his sore arms somewhat. The nurse later asked, “You said something about an agent. Was the strange assassin dressed in black?” Now having the urge to talk more, Morningstar recalled what he could remember from that evening, “Agent Omega was his name. He impersonated himself as a student named Étoile Feu. I led him to the tower by accident. That’s when he revealed his true colors and tried to kill me. Where is he now?” “According to the security, some medical officers saw him covering his bleeding forehead, so they tried to send him to a separate hospital room, but somehow he was quick to escape before any other doctors could check up on him.”, answers the doctor.

The nurse then discusses a prescription for Morningstar. “At least we managed to restore your consciousness. However, we noticed some severe scars on your chest and biceps. Our prescription is that you remain in the hospital for the rest of the orientation.” Morningstar couldn’t believe the prescription. “What, no! I can come back to orientation. I’m stronger than this. I can’t miss out. If everyone else is having more fun on the main campus, so can I.” “You can find other fun activities and make new friends after the orientation. After all, classes don’t start for seven days, and the scars should heal quickly. You’ll be in better condition by then.”, answers the doctor. Morningstar is uneager to miss out on the rest of the orientation. Still, he knows he has no choice but to stay in the hospital. “Fine, but only because it’s protocol.”

After thirty-six hours, Cadet Morningstar is treated for his wounds, leaving the hospital in good health and with a fresh, new uniform. Just as he exits through the doorway, he notices the Bolt Needle under renovation. To the cadet, seeing the tower gives him a swollen pain in the throat, almost as if he wants to cry. However, Morningstar hides away his negative emotions and decides to come clean from earlier. He had hoped things would go well for the next five years.



You have reached the end of our preview.

Curious about what will happen next?

Don't despair!

You'll see it all in the exciting story of

Colonel Bleep

and the Uncharted Earth

*Coming to a galaxy near you on November
28, 1957*

(Plus 67 years)

Long ago, an animated series changed the course of color television. Decades later, the show fell into obscurity until film archivists slowly restored it piece by piece. Despite this ongoing renaissance, no one has ever been willing to retell Colonel Bleep's story from a whole new perspective—until now.

It was a time of pivotal moments. On July 16, 1945, the nuclear bomb was born, altering history's course. Then, on October 4, 1957, Sputnik, the first artificial space probe, was launched into space. Futurians, an advanced extraterrestrial race from planet Futura, send Colonel Lucius "Bleep" Morningstar to investigate Earth's rapid technological leap. This brilliant but workaholic space ranger accepts this top-secret mission, venturing into a world unlike his own. Along the way, he encountered two misfitted earthlings: Clive 'Scratch' Rockwell, a prehistoric human with a heart of gold and a skill for survival, and Squeak, a young, mischievous marionette yearning to explore the vast universe beyond Earth. The three unlikely companions gradually find common ground with one another and will need each other in the best and worst of times.

Yet, their unity is not unbreakable. In a life-or-death situation, Colonel Bleep finds himself pitted against Dr. Destructo, a hooded criminal mastermind with a relentless desire to exterminate the spaceman. Torn between fear and suspicion, Bleep must tread a treacherous path of survival, grappling to understand the villain's motives and bloodlust. With the help of his new friends, it will take courage, teamwork, and determination before Colonel Bleep is ready to confront his arch-nemesis and save himself and his allies from jeopardy.

Written as a love letter to the early space age and packed with over 70 vibrant midcentury modern illustrations, Colonel Bleep and the Uncharted Earth is a thrilling yet heartfelt adventure you don't want to miss.